

Serial No. 10/615,400
Amdt. dated May 6, 2005
Reply to Office Action of November 9, 2004

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REMARKS

The drawings have been corrected in the manner required. No new matter has been added. A Replacement Sheet and an Annotated Sheet showing the changes made are attached.

The Specification has been corrected in the manner required. No new matter has been added. A Substitute Specification and a marked-up copy of the original Specification are attached.

Claims 15, 24 and 32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. 4,976,444 to Richards. Reconsideration of this rejection is requested for the following reasons.

As initial matter it is noted claim 24 has been examined notwithstanding the examiner's earlier statements in connection with the restriction requirement. Accordingly, it is believed the restriction requirement with respect to this claim is now withdrawn.

Richards fails to disclose a guide element having a groove extending therein for receiving a sealing ring in the manner recited in claims 15, 24 and 32. The annular sealing element 72 of Richards is not received in a groove.

Richards also fails to disclose a sealing ring cylindrical inner surface adapted to be positioned adjacent a shaft surface to be sealed as recited in claims 15, 24 and 32. The inner axial surface 80 of Richards is not adjacent the shaft 38.

Richards further fails to disclose a seal disposed between a sealing ring end face and a groove first side wall so that any pressure occurring between the groove bottom wall and the sealing

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ring outer cylindrical surface is maintained less than the pressure between the shaft and the guide element as recited in claims 15 and 24. The fluid pressure between shaft 38 and guide element 12 in Richards is low pressure whereas the fluid pressure in region 48 is high pressure. See Col. 4, lines 15-16, 24-25. The rejection regarding claim 32 is improper for identical reasons. Richards fails to disclose a seal providing the pressure propagation in the manner claimed.

Claims 16-18 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Richards in view of U.S. 3,743,304 to Lindeboom. These claims depend from claim 15. This rejection is improper for all the reasons stated above; namely, the failure of Richards to disclose a groove, cylindrical ring inner surface and seal as recited in these claims.

Claims 21-22 are allowed.

A check in the amount of \$510.00 is attached in payment of the government Extension of Time fee extending the due date for responding to this Office action from February 9, 2005 to May 9, 2005.

It is believed no additional fees are due. Should that determination be incorrect, the Office is authorized to charge any deficiencies to Deposit Account No. 19-2105 and notify the undersigned.

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Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: MAY 6, 2005


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Attachments

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached Replacement Sheet of drawings changes figure 3. This sheet replaces the original sheet which includes figures 2-6. As shown in the attached Annotated Sheet, figure 3 is identified in the drawing as Prior Art.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet
 Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

ANNOTATED SHEET SHOWING CHANGES
2 / 3

Fig. 2a

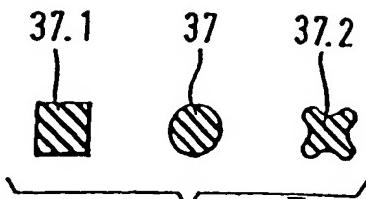
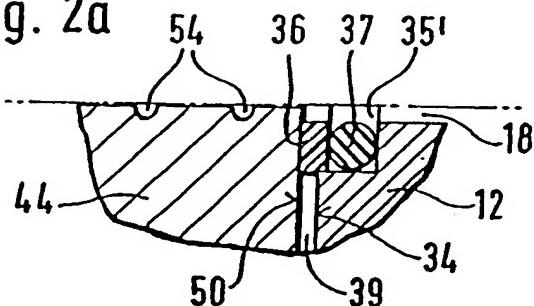


Fig. 2b

Fig. 3
(Prior Art)

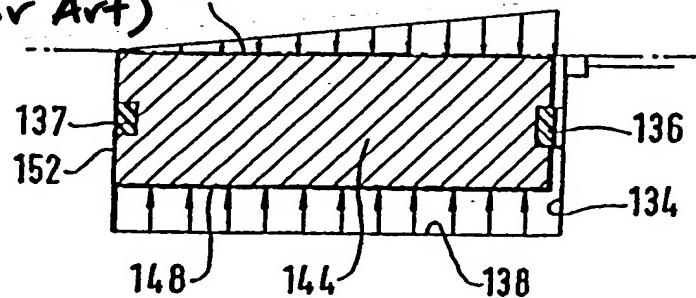


Fig. 4

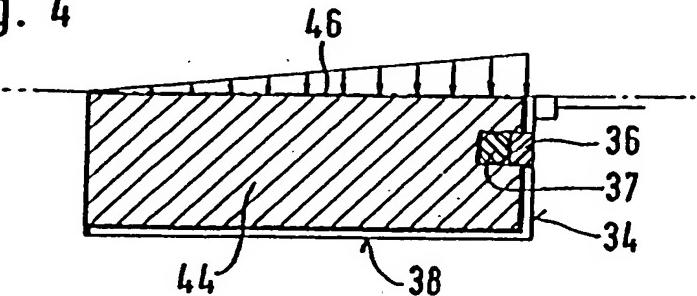


Fig. 5

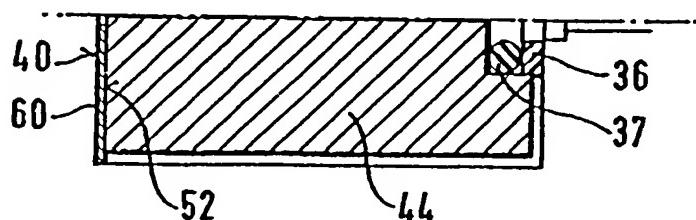


Fig. 6

